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SIRHAN 8/4/71

URGENT

BY YVONNE PATTEN

LOS ANGELES(CNS)--THE COUNTY GRAND JURY WILL CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION TO DETERMINE WHETHER UNAUTHORIZED PERSONS HAVE BEEN ALLOWED ACCESS TO THE EXHIBITS IN THE ROBERT F. KENNEDY ASSASSINATION CASE, DISTRICT ATTORNEY JOSEPH P. BUSCH JR. SAID TODAY.

BUSH, IN A PREPARED STATEMENT, SAID THE INVESTIGATION WILL BEGIN AUG.

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HE STRESSED THE PROBE IS "MERELY ONE PHASE OF OUR TOTAL INVESTIGATIVE EFFORT RELATIVE TO THE....ALLEGATIONS."

FOR SEVERAL WEEKS NOW, BUSCH'S OFFICE HAS BEEN INVESTIGATING ALLEGATIONS BY ATTORNEY BARBARA WARNER BLEHR, WHO CLAIMS A LOS ANGELES POLICE CRIMINALIST, DEWAYNE WOLFER, VIOLATED PROCEDURES INVOLVING BALLISTICS EVIDENCE IN THE TRIAL OF CONDEMNED ASSASSIN SIRHAN BISHARA SIRHAN.

SIRHAN CURRENTLY IS UNDER A DEATH SENTENCE AFTER BEING CONVICTED OF THE JUNE 5, 1968, ASSASSINATION OF SEN. KENNEDY, THEN SEEKING THE DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION.

"OUR INVESTIGATION, THOUGH NOT YET COMPLETE, HAS DISCLOSED THAT A NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS HAVE EXAMINED THE ORIGINAL EXHIBITS IN THE SIRHAN CASE WITHOUT SECURING A COURT ORDER DIRECTING THE (COUNTY) CLERK'S OFFICE TO MAKE SUCH ORIGINAL EXHIBITS AVAILABLE," BUSCH SAID.

THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY EXPLAINED THAT WHEN SIRHAN ORIGINALLY WAS INDICTED FOR KENNEDY'S MURDER, SUPERIOR JUDGE ARTHUR L. ALARCON ISSUED AN ORDER THAT THE CLERK NOT MAKE EXHIBITS AVAILABLE "TO ANY PERSON OR AGENCY EXCEPT UPON ORDER OF THIS COURT."

BUSCH SAID THE ORDER WAS NEVER REVOKED.

HE ADDED THE ORDER WAS AUGMENTED A YEAR LATER BY ANOTHER WHICH WAS ISSUED BY SUPERIOR JUDGE HERBERT V. WALKER, WHO PRESIDED OVER SIRHAN'S TRIAL.

IT IS IMPORTANT, BUSCH NOTED, THAT IN ALL CRIMINAL CASES EVIDENCE WHICH HAS BEEN USED TO DETERMINE A DEFENDANT'S GUILT OR INNOCENCE BE PRESERVED.

"IN A CASE OF HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE INVOLVING THE POLITICAL ASSASSINATION OF A NATIONAL FIGURE, MUCH GREATER SECURITY IS OBVIOUSLY DESIRABLE BECAUSE OF THE CONTINUING INTEREST IN SUCH MATTERS," HE SAID.

"AS A RESULT OF OUR INVESTIGATION TO DATE, I HAVE DECIDED TO PRESENT THIS MATTER TO THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY GRAND JURY ON AUG. 16, 1971, TO DETERMINE, FROM TESTIMONY GIVEN UNDER OATH, THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF THE VIOLATION OF THE COURT ORDER REGARDING THE SIRHAN EXHIBITS," THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY EXPLAINED.

THE MAIN PURPOSE OF SUCH AN INVESTIGATION "WILL BE TO FOCUS UPON THE INTEGRITY OF THE ORIGINAL EXHIBITS IN ORDER TO DETERMINE IF ANY OTHER APPROPRIATE ACTION NEEDS TO BE TAKEN," BUSCH CONCLUDED.

BUSCH IS ON VACATION. THE PREPARED STATEMENT WAS RELEASED BY AIDES.

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